

Appl. No. 10/709,817  
Amdt. dated August 03, 2005  
Reply to Office action of June 15, 2005

### REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

1. Rejection of claims 1, 4, 5, and 13-16 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a):

Claims 1, 4, 5, and 13-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zook (US 1,624,458) in view of Kise (US 4,290,215).

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**Response:**

Claim 1 has been amended to overcome this rejection. Claim 1 now contains the limitations previously found in claim 6, and claim 6 has subsequently been cancelled. No new matter has been entered through this amendment. Claim 6 had previously been indicated as allowable if written in independent form. Claims 4, 5, and 13-16 are dependent on claim 1, and should be allowable if claim 1 is allowable. Reconsideration of claims 1, 4, 5, and 13-16 is respectfully requested.

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2. Rejection of claims 2 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a):

Claims 2 and 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zook (US 1,624,458) in view of Kise (US 4,290,215), and further in view of Panzer (US 5,245,844).

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**Response:**

Claims 2 and 3 are dependent on claim 1, and should be allowable if claim 1 is allowable. Reconsideration of claims 2 and 3 is respectfully requested.

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3. Introduction to new claims 17 and 18:

New claim 17 is drafted based on the original claim 1. In addition, claim 17 also contains a limitation which specifies that "the diameter of the first recess is less than the diameter of a section of the rod adjacent to the first recess". New

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claim 18 also recites a second recess and a second collar having a structure similar to that of the first recess and the first collar. Claims 17 and 18 are supported in paragraph [0016] of the specification and in Figs.1-2. No new matter has been added.

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On the other hand, none of the Zook, Kise, and Panzer patents teach first or second recesses surrounded by first and second collars, in which the diameters of the first and second recesses are less than the diameters of sections of the rod adjacent to the first and second recesses. Therefore, the applicants submit that claims 17 and 18 are patentable over the cited prior art.

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Since all pending claims are believed to be in condition for allowance, the applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

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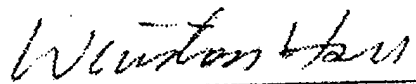
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Sincerely yours,

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Date: August 3, 2005

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